



DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION
HEALTH CARE BULLETIN
Issued: April 22, 2009

Measles (Rubeola)

Audience: ALL STAFF

Recently, a number of cases of measles have been confirmed in Virginia and potential cases reported in DC.

Potential Measles Exposures in the District of Columbia

Locations and Times (Information provided by the DC Department of Health)

Saturday, April 4, 2009 Pot Belly Restaurant (Near Federal Center Metro) 409 3rd Street, SW 3:30 pm - 7 pm	Wednesday, April 8, 2009 Safeway Grocery Store 401 M Street, SW 3 pm - 5:30 pm
Friday, April 10, 2009 Safeway Grocery Store 401 M Street, SW 3 pm - 5:30 pm	Saturday, April 11, 2009, 11:45 pm until Sunday, April 12, 2009, 5 am Ultra Bar 911 F Street, NW

People who were at any of these locations on these dates and during the specified time may have been exposed to measles. If you think you have been exposed and have questions, concerns or symptoms, [please call the DC Department of Health](#).

- DC Residents: 311
- Non-DC residents: (202) 737-4404

People who were at these locations on any other date or at any other time do not need to call.

What are measles?

- Measles is a virus which usually grows in the back of the throat and in the cells that line the lungs.
- Measles is a highly contagious virus which is primarily a respiratory infection.
- Measles is also called rubeola.

Symptoms

Symptoms and signs of measles may not appear immediately and may take up to 10-12 days after exposure.

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Symptoms include:

- Fever, dry cough, runny nose, inflamed eyes (conjunctivitis) sensitivity to light, tiny white spots with bluish-white centers found inside the mouth and inner lining of the cheek.
- Skin rash which usually spreads rapidly downward to the chest and back and finally to the thighs and feet.
- Flat blotchy spots, usually on the face, along the hairline and behind the ears, watery eyes which last about a week.
- Other symptoms may include a high fever (often as high as 104-105F), diarrhea and earache.

Complications

The National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases reports that approximately 20% of all reported measles cases experience one or more complications. The risk of complications and death are more common in children under 5 years of age and adults over 20 years of age. In 2006, 67% of the confirmed cases of measles occurred in adults, 20 years and older.

Complications include:

- Ear infections
- Encephalitis – inflammation of the brain which is caused by a viral infection which can result in vomiting, convulsions and, rarely, coma.
- Pneumonia – As many as one in 15 people who contract measles gets pneumonia. Pneumonia can be life threatening and should be treated immediately.
- Diarrhea or vomiting – These symptoms are more common in infants and children but can occur in adults.
- Bronchitis, laryngitis or croup – Caused by inflammation of the voice box (larynx) or inflammation of the inner walls that line the main air passageways of your lungs.
- Low platelet count – Measles can decrease the type of red blood cells that are essential for blood to clot.

Transmission

Measles are highly contagious and are spread by contact with an infected person through coughing or sneezing. Measles can be transmitted from 4 days prior to onset of a rash to 4 days after the onset.

If someone has measles, there is a 90% chance those in close contact with them will also become infected.

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The virus resides in the mucus of the nose and throat and can be easily transmitted when a person sneezes or coughs which produces small droplets of spray. The virus can also be spread through touching the nose or mouth or after handling an infected surface.

The virus remains active and contagious for up to 2 hours on surfaces.

Tests, Diagnosis and Treatment

Your doctor will usually diagnose the disease based on the characteristic rash but it can also be confirmed through blood tests.

There are no treatments for the measles. You should seek medication attention for any related complications which do have methods of treatment including antibiotics.

Prevention

If you already have had measles, your body has built up its immune system to fight the infection and you can't get them again. If you were born or living in the US before 1957 you probably have immunity to measles, even if you were never vaccinated. There had been several measles epidemics and most people built up a natural immunity to the virus even if you did not have the symptoms.

Vaccination is a highly effective way to prevent measles and is often called the Measles or MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) or MR vaccine. The MMR vaccine is a live, weakened combination vaccine that protects against measles, mumps and rubella.

You should contact your health care provider if you think you have been exposed to or have signs of measles or have questions about the measles vaccine.

Additional information and resources:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/measles/DS00331>

<http://newsroom.dc.gov/show.aspx/agency/doh/section/2/release/16804>

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_measles.htm

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/measles.html>